

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-20 are all the claims pending in the application. In response to the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define patentable subject matter.

Overview of the Office Action

Claims 1-5 and 9-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 62-215441 (hereafter “JP ‘441”). Claims 8 and 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ‘441. Claims 6, 7, 18, 19, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP ‘441 in view of Dachtler (U.S. Patent No. 6,886,827). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 1 recites in part:

a plurality of suction cups provided at predetermined intervals along a transverse direction of the sheet, and sucking the sheet; and a suction cup operation device which can displace the plurality of suction cups over a predetermined stroke in a suction cup axial direction, and which, at a point in time when the sheet is sucked by the plurality of suction cups and raised up by a predetermined amount, displaces at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups independently of others of the suction

cups, so as to cause the sucked sheet to curve wavily along the transverse direction.

To anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim. See MPEP § 2131. Moreover, “[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim.” *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989), cited in MPEP § 2131.

Applicant respectfully submits that JP ‘441 does not teach or suggest every element of independent claim 1. Specifically, there is no teaching or suggestion in JP ‘441 of at a point in time when the sheet is sucked by the plurality of suction cups and raised up by a predetermined amount, displaces at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups independently of others of the suction cups, so as to cause the sucked sheet to curve wavily along the transverse direction as recited in independent claim 1.

Independent claim 1 recites that at the point in time when the sheet is sucked by the plurality of suction cups and is raised up by a predetermined amount (see FIGS. 1, 2, 5, and 9 for example), alternate suction cups may be displaced in order to cause the sucked sheet to curve in a wave-like manner along the transverse direction of the sheet. In one exemplary embodiment of the instant invention, when the printing plate 12 is sucked, and lifted up by a predetermined amount, odd numbered actuators 60 and even numbered actuators are operated simultaneously (pages 26-28 of the specification).

FIG 4(b) of JP ‘441 depicts the movement of a single suction cup; FIG. 4(c) depicts the movement or displacement of the three inner suction cups, 64b, 64c, and 64d, so that the central

portion of a sheet curves upwards. There is no teaching or suggestion in JP '441 of the displacement of at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups at a point in time when the sheet is sucked by the plurality of suction cups.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable over JP '441 because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claim. Claims 2-13 are also allowable based at least on their dependence on independent claim 1.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '441.

Independent claim 14 recites in part:

sucking the sheet by a plurality of suction cups provided along a transverse direction of the sheet; and after sucking the sheet, raising the sheet up by a predetermined amount by the plurality of suction cups, and causing the sheet to curve wavyly along the transverse direction by stroke-displacing at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups independently of others of the plurality of suction cups.

Applicant respectfully submits that there is no teaching or suggestion in JP '441 of after sucking the sheet, raising the sheet up by a predetermined amount by the plurality of suction cups, and causing the sheet to curve wavyly along the transverse direction by stroke-displacing at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups independently of others of the plurality of suction cups as recited in claim 14 and as analogously discussed above with regard to independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 14 is allowable over JP '441 because

the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claim. Claims 15-20 are also allowable based at least on their dependence on independent claim 14

Dachtler teaches a lifter device (1, Fig. 5) for separating the uppermost of a stack of flexible workpieces 3 in suction holders 7 for engaging a sheet 2 when suction is applied thereto (column 5, lines 4-58). At least one suction holder 7 adjacent a side of the frame is movable independently of other suction cups 5 (column 5, lines 4-21) spaced inwardly therefrom (Fig. 6) to bend an edge portion of the workpiece upwardly (Fig. 6). However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Dachtler that at a point in time when the sheet is sucked by the plurality of suction cups and raised up by a predetermined amount, displaces at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups so as to cause the sucked sheet to curve wavily along the transverse direction as recited by independent claim 1, and no teaching or suggestion of after sucking the sheet, raising the sheet up by a predetermined amount by the plurality of suction cups, and causing the sheet to curve wavily along the transverse direction by stroke-displacing at least every other one of the plurality of suction cups independently of others of the plurality of suction cups, as recited by independent claim 14. Accordingly, Dachtler does not cure the deficiencies of JP '441.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1-20 are patentable because the cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims.

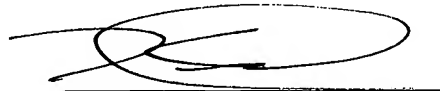
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 10/727,622
Attorney Docket No. Q78685

Art Unit No. 3653

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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